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SUBJECT: SUCCESSFUL EID DINNER IN MAURITIUS

¶1. Ambassador Cabrera hosted a very successful dinner with Mauritian Muslim leaders on November 6 to mark Eid al Fitr. Among the record number of guests were Acting President Raouf Bundhun, most of the Muslim members of parliament (MP) from all parties, the Deputy Supreme Court justice, many top government officials and business leaders, and senior religious personalities. The owner of one of the country's two Muslim newspapers, Reza Issack, who is also Lord Mayor of Port Louis and an MP, participated as did the Egyptian and Pakistani High Commissioners and their deputies. The Embassy's Muslim staff attended as guests.

¶2. Ambassador Cabrera welcomed the guests and conveyed some of President Bush's remarks on the meaning and importance of Ramadan. President of the World Islamic Research and Advisory Council Idriss Mahmaud spoke at length about the universality and centrality of the Koran's emphasis on love and faith. He emphasized how Ramadan serves to bring observant Muslims closer to Allah. U.S. Navy Senior Chaplain Captain Ronnie King, drew on his relationships with other military chaplains and his work for the Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, to speak movingly on the need for respectful dialogue among religious leaders. Captain King's contribution was one of the highlights of the evening. Acting President Bundhun closed the by warmly welcoming Ambassador Cabrera to Mauritius.

¶3. In conversation with Embodys, some guests cited their simultaneous efforts to fight extremism within Islam and anti-Islamic sentiment around the world. Many guests said they were pleased with the efforts made by the Embassy to promote communication and understanding with the Muslim community. There was no discussion of the Saddam Hussein verdict and little discussion of U.S. foreign policy in general.

¶4. This was the Embassy's second successive Eid dinner. Nissar Ramtoola, President of the Jumma Mosque, suggested in 2005 that a dinner after Ramadan would provide a longer and more relaxing environment than an Iftaar during Ramadan which is constrained by obligations to pray and attend mosque. Acting President Bundhun and others commented that this Eid dinner was more enjoyable and appropriate than an Iftaar dinner.

CABRERA